BMHA Newsletter *104012 mo3112 HAMS 07 AMERICA



Volume 14, Number 1

Jan-Jun 2003

BMHA Forum at Hamvention 2003!

May 18, 2003

The 13th annual BMHA forum is set for Sunday, May 18th at 8:00 am in Room 2. This is the same location we have held the forum the last few years. We have been allocated only one hour from 8:30-9:30, but as in past years, we find the room is unoccupied at 8:00. We will meet informally in the room for the first half hour. The official forum will start at 8:30 am. This arrangement gives us plenty of time to socialize and exchange ideas.

The BMHA forum's featured speaker will be John Cumming, VE3JC, discussing "Bicycle Mobile Antennas – Past, Present and Future."

The BMHA website at http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA/ has further forum details. To volunteer as a BMHA forum speaker, please contact me at nf0n@arrl.net

Plans are also forming for the Annual Hamvention BMHA Bike Ride on May 17th. Make plans to bring your bike and ride with us. Look for details on the BMHA website http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA/ for any last minute details.

See you at Dayton!

Forum Moderator Mike Nickolaus, NF0N

The Dayton Hamvention website is located at: http://www.hamvention.org/ -Ed.

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America's Twelth Annual Hamvention Ride

Tipp City Park, Tipp City, Ohio Ride Begins 3:30 PM Saturday, May 17, 2003

Come and meet your fellow BMHA members and check out their bicycle-mounted transceivers. Set up a special-event station. You can bring your bike and come on the ride, or relax in the park and perhaps have a QSO with those of us on the ride. Also, in response to requests from BMHAers who may have logistical problems getting their bikes to the Dayton area...

RENTAL BIKES WILL BE AVAILABLE !!

Our friends at Tipp Cyclery (whom you may remember as the donor of the "I Traveled the Farthest to the BMHA Ride" T-shirt) have informed us that a limited number of rental bikes will be available. For more info, check out their web site at www.tippcyclery.com, or send me an email and I'll put you in touch with them.

General Information

Once again the ride will start from the Municipal Park in Tipp City, Ohio. Tipp City is on Interstate 75, about 10 miles northeast of the Hamvention site at Hara Arena.

The ride will leave at 3:30 PM EDT. If you'd like to come up early for a snack or some socializing, we'll be there by about 2:00 PM. We'll be in the North parking lot (same as last year). Don't worry about finding us, it's not as if you could hide a bunch of biker-hams in a park that size. The ride itself is normally an easy 27 miles with stops thrown in occasionally to keep everyone together, and slow enough for some meaningful conversation (or DXing).

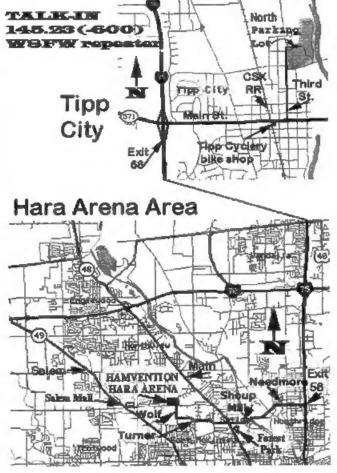
For the latest details, the map, and some interesting pictures, visit: http://my.ohio.voyager.net/~otown/bmha.html

Send me an email if you have any ideas, or just to let me know your coming. (It's always nice to know how many people to plan for.) But there's no registration or anything formal like that. Just show up!

See you there,

Jim Gumbert, NC8Y otown@infinet.com Tipp City BMHA Ride Start/Finish West New Milton Carlise Exit 68 Vandalia Englewo Needmore Ro Hamvention Fairborn (Wright Bross Pkwy Hara Arena.

Directions to the Hamvention Ride are on Page 2...



First, go east to I-75. If you're in front of Hara, you'll notice that Wolf Rd. dead ends into Shiloh Springs Rd. (the main road that Hara is on) at the traffic light right in front. Take Wolf Rd. south about a quarter-mile to the first intersection. This is Turner Rd. Turn left (you can only turn left), and stay on this road until you get to I-75 (about three miles).

NOTE: Turner Rd. changes into Shoup Mill Rd. when you cross Main St. It then becomes Needmore Rd. when you cross the Stillwater River. HOWEVER, all of these roads together are known as (and usually marked) Wright Bros. Pkwy.

When you get to I-75 and Needmore go NORTH (left, across the bridge).

Look for the Tipp City exit (EXIT 68) in about 10 miles. Turn right (east) at the top of the ramp. This is Main St. in Tipp City.

Take Main St. into "downtown" (about a mile). You will cross a railroad track (Tipp Cyclery is on the right as you cross if you need anything for your bike).

Turn left (north) at the second traffic light past the railroad. This is THIRD ST.

Look for the park on the right after four or five blocks. You'll see a civil-war era cannon on the left, in front of the American Legion. The north parking lot entrance is about a block further north. We'll be around the parking lot someplace. Talk-in is on 145.23 MHz (-).

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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BMHA NEWSLETTER is a quarterly publication of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America – Jan, Apr, July, and Oct. Permission is given to reproduce any of the material in this issue, provided the author is credited and the source is acknowledged as "from the Newsletter of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America." Please send a clip to the address below. We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork – anything pertaining to the combining of bicycling with amateur radio.

The BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association, the League of American Bicyclists, and Worldradio.

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

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ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a 'Stray' in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile," signed by Hartley Alley, NAOA. Twenty-five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our eight subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is firmly established as a 'regular' at this world-renowned event.

This is the forty-sixth issue of our periodic newsletter, which has become *the* clearinghouse for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, E-mail address list, E-mail discussion group, the annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA Newsletter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. A membership application is on the next-to-last page.

FEATURE ARTICLE

THE PERFECT HF BICYCLE MOBILE ANTENNA

By Bonnie Crystal KQ6XA

INTRODUCTION

HF Bicycle Mobile operation has increased significantly over the last two years. The popularity is partly due to increased interest, awareness, and organization of it among radio operators; and partly due to miniaturization and reduced weight of battery operated transcievers. This article includes an overview of important factors about the installation and choice of an HF bicycle mobile antenna system. Included is a listing with subjective ratings for various configurations of antennas which have been successfully used by the author.

IMPORTANT FEATURES FOR BICYCLE MOBILE ANTENNAS

An HF Bicycle Mobile antenna should be safe, strong, durable, flexible, lightweight, highly efficient, frequency agile. easy to adjust low SWR, collapsible, and cover 80~10 meters. Some mounts and antennas made for automobile HF operation may be applicable to bike mobile, but most automobile antennas are not optimized for bike operation. Standard mobile 3/8-24 threaded fittings are desirable for mounting and putting together different configurations. Unlike the automotive standard of 13 feet, the height of a bicycle antenna should probably be kept under 9 or 10 feet (depending upon QTH), and the tip should be very flexible, due to lower overhanging tree branches encountered on sidewalks and bike paths. The antenna should be mounted on the rear of the bicycle as far back as possible, and slanted backwards between 20 and 45 degrees to minimize both wind drag and proximity of the RF radiating element to the rider's head and torso. For a variety of reasons, a whip antenna is by far the most practical and effective choice.

SAFETY ISSUES FOR BIKE MOBILE INSTALLATIONS

Above all, a bicycle mobile antenna should be safe for the rider and surrounding people. Even if the rider intends to only operate the bike off-road, at some point almost all bicycle riders find themselves encountering automobile and truck traffic. It is of utmost importance that the Bicycle Mobile radio system should not impair the rider's balance, vision, or ability to maneuver. Weight and leverage on the bike frame is an important factor which should be considered when installing the mountings. The antenna and radio system should be mounted well clear of the rider and provide space for body motions. Bicycle operation subjects the antenna system to road vibration, side-to-side mechanical oscillations, and wind gusts. The antenna should produce a minimum of added wind drag. A small yellow or orange ribbon streamer attached with a blunt ball of tape on the tip of the antenna is a useful safety feature both for traffic visibility and to help prevent eye injury. SSB operation is made easier and safer by the use of a single-ear headset equipped with "break-away" connector and a handlebar Push=ON/Push=OFF or toggle

PTT switch. Standard momentary PTT buttons that require constant finger pressure should be avoided. CW operation can be both fun and easy with a miniature paddle mounted on the handlebar adjacent to the brake lever. All heavy or sharp objects in the radio system should be well padded and secured. When installing the bike mobile equipment, consideration should be given to what might happen to the rider should there be an unexpected fall.

THE SEARCH FOR A PERFECT BICYCLE MOBILE ANTENNA

As an antenna designer and experimenter, my personal search for the "Perfect Bike Mobile Antenna" has been fun! Over the past year. I've tried variations of many different configurations and models of commercial and homebrew antennas on my Bicycle Mobile (BikeE model AT recumbent, no longer in production). All of these antennas were mounted on the rear rack rail of the bike, tilted back at a 35 degree angle from vertical, using the bicycle's metal frame for a counterpoise. The antenna mount "ground" connection is bonded to the frame with copper braid. For composite-frame bicycles, the addition of adhesive copper or aluminum tape is suggested for bonding all the metal parts together, including the front and rear axles. Much of my HF bicycle activity is on 18157.5kHz USB, where I've had Bike-to-Bike OSOs with over 10 other /BM operators. My bike activity includes all HF amateur bands from 80 to 10 meters, with DX, local, and NVIS propagation.

RATING BIKE MOBILE ANTENNA CONFIGURATIONS

There are pros and cons to almost every antenna system. Some aspects of a bike mobile antenna may be more important than others, therefore, a suitable effective compromise may be the best answer. The following list includes some of the very best antenna configurations I have personally used, along with some subjective ratings, descriptions, and comments about each of them.

RATINGS CATEGORIES

Safety (NOTE: Depends upon installation)
Flexibility
Low Weight
Low Leverage
Strength / Durability
Ease of Removal or Collapsible
Radiation Efficiency
Ease of Mounting
Ease of Frequency Agility
Low Wind Drag
Standard 3/8-24 Threads
Low Height

SUBJECTIVE RATING SCALE: 1 TO 5

5=Excellent 4=Good 3=Normal 2=Not-Useful 1=Not-Applicable

ANTENNA CONFIGURATION RATING LIST

(in no particular order of preference)

A. SUPER ANTENNAS MODEL MP-2

- ... miniature motorized screwdriver
- ... 48 inch stainless steel whip
- ... no base rod
- ... tested on 7~28MHz

Safety=4, Flexibility=5, Low Weight=3, Low Leverage=5, Strength / Durability=4, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=4, Radiation Efficiency=4: 18-28MHz=4; 7-14MHz=3, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (While Riding 7-54MHz)=5, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

B. SUPER ANTENNAS MODEL MP-2

- ... miniature motorized screwdriver
- ... 48 inch thin stainless steel whip
- ... with short base rod
- ... tested on 7~28Mhz

Safety=4, Flexibility=4, Low Weight=3, Low Leverage=3, Strength/Durability=4, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=4, Radiation Efficiency=4: 14~28MHz=4; 7~10MHz=3, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (While Riding 7~30MHz)=5, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

C. SUPER ANTENNAS MODEL MP-1

- ... manual screwdriver
- ... telescopic whip
- ... long base rod
- ... tested on 7~28MHz (3.8MHz with added coil)

Safety=4, Flexibility=3, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=4, Strength/Durability=3, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=5, Radiation Efficiency=5: 10-28MHz=5; 3.5~7MHz=3, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (Stop to adjust)=4, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

D. SUPER ANTENNAS MODEL MP-1

- ... manual screwdriver
- ... 48 inch thin stainless steel whip
- ... short base rod
- ... tested on 7~28MHz (3.8MHz with added coil)

Safety=4, Flexibility=5, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=4, Strength/Durability=4, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=5, Radiation Efficiency=5: 10~28MHz=5; 3.5~7MHz=3, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (Stop to adjust)=4, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

E. BUDDIPOLE MODEL BUDDISTICK

- ... tapped coil, extra added tap points
- ... telescopic stainless steel whip
- ... with standard base rod
- ... tested on 7~28MHz

Safety=4, Flexibility=3, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=4, Strength/Durability=4, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=5,

Radiation Efficiency=5: 10~28MHz=5; 7MHz=4, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (Stop/set-taps/adjust)=3, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

F. BUDDIPOLE MODEL BUDDISTICK

- ... 48 inch thin stainless steel whip added
- ... with standard base rod
- ... tapped coil, extra added tap points
- ... tested on 7~28MHz

Safety=4, Flexibility=4, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=5, Strength/Durability=5, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=4, Radiation Efficiency=5: 10~28MHz=5; 7MHz=4, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (Stop, tap change)=3, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

G. LAKEVIEW MODEL HAMSTICK 14 MHz

... single band fiber/stainless whip

Safety=4, Flexibility=5, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=4, Strength/Durability=5, Ease of Removal or Collapsible (not collapsible)=3, Radiation Efficiency=4, Ease of Mounting=5, Ease of Frequency Agility (Single band only!)=1, Low Wind Drag=5, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=5, Low Height=5

H. HOMEBREW CABELLAS FISHING POLE and ATU

- ... 14ft telescopic composite fishing pole
- ... spiralled #24 wire taped to pole
- ... Automatic Antenna Tuning Unit (VX-1200)

Safety=3, Flexibility=3, Low Weight=5, Low Leverage=3, Strength/Durability=3, Ease of Removal or Collapsible=4, Radiation Efficiency=5: 10~30MHz=5; 3.5~7MHz=3, Ease of Mounting (taped onto short alum. rod)=3, Ease of Frequency Agility (While riding, with ATU)=5, Low Wind Drag=3, Standard 3/8-24 Threads=1, Low Height=1

CONCLUSION

The "perfect" bike mobile antenna may not yet exist! But, there are some excellent configurations available to the bike mobile operator by mixing and matching different commercial and homebrew components. Perhaps an extremely flexible thin 7.5ft whip, combined with a lightweight motorized high Q tuned coil at the base provides the safest and most efficient frequency agile system. For the rider that strives for lowest weight, a manually tuned system could be the answer... although quick frequency tune up may be a decisive factor for those who don't wish to stop for band changes while riding. The author hopes this article inspires more experimentation and on-air HF bicycle mobile activity among radio operators, and helps to clarify some of the issues involved in building a good bicycle antenna. Ride safely and carry a big signal!

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WEBMASTER'S CORNER

As with (I am sure) most of you, this has been a busy season. I haven't made the updates to the website that I promised, but there are a few changes that you should be aware of.

The website remains at the URL of http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA. This will not change, but we also have an alternate address which may be easier to remember: http://BMHA.LaFetra.com. If you prefer one representation over the other, let us know -- but remember that both will work -- the "old" address is not going away.

I confess that I made a BIG "boo-boo" with the Survey last issue – Although I set things up, I forgot to link it properly to the website. So many of you may not have had a chance to participate. This also may explain the low turnout (12 members) this cycle.

I will leave the same survey in place this cycle -- please visit at http://BMHA.LaFetra.com/Survey. I'm using the "alternate" address. The "standard" address of http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA/Survey also works fine.

Results so far: I am surprised that so many of you live in snow-weather states (8 vs. 3 "sunny-state" responses). From my perspective in the "sunny" San Francisco Bay Area, I just don't understand snow. :-)

You really would like to see some articles on:

- 1) Medium interest on winter-weather riding and operating procedures.
- 2) High interest on personal experiences, mounting radios, and (especially) mounting antennas.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will see how I chose to mount my antenna on the FRONT of my bicycle. Most of you choose the rear, but I really prefer the front. The article will show you why I feel this way.

Our plans are to solicit more "how-to" articles from you (the membership) and help publicize your solutions in the Newsletter. I'd also like to put the best of these on the Website, but delayed a few months after publication in the newsletter.

Finally, I've been busy with activities centered on "how-to-feed-the-family". I am a manager in a major Dow 30 company who recently acquired another company in a well-publicized proxy fight. This has been an "interesting" experience. We've been successful, but it has caused many longstanding policies to be revisited and revised.

One of these revisions has been both a "boon" and a "bane". I have lots of "earned but unused" excess vacation that I must use -- so I am compelled to take every-other-Friday off (or equivalent). Before you start throwing stones at me - the workload hasn't changed, so I basically have to make up the effort the rest of the time.

But I have decided to use this time to get out on the bicycle more – and one result is the review of the Garmain eMap GPS handlebar mount you'll find in this issue. I've had the mount for many months, but had not taken the time to mount it on my bicycle. Why get a GPS when you are riding in familiar territory anyhow? Read and find out.

Keep riding -- I'm on the road (at a minimum) every other Friday. Since it doesn't snow here, I'll be on the road (but perhaps very wet with rain!).

Until next time.

Skip AA6WK BMHA-Webmaster@LaFetra.com

Mounting the Antenna of the Front of the Bike Skip La Fetra, AA6WK

When I first started running Bicycle Mobile, I grabbed my speaker-mike, stuffed my handheld into a jersey pocket, and started operating. As most of you have found out, this doesn't work very well because the HT's rubber-duck antenna is inefficient, especially when pressed against your body!

My next attempt (which actually worked surprisingly well) was to put a BNC "elbow" between the HT and the rubber-duck. This (at least in theory) allowed the antenna to point straight-out from my jersey pocket rather than snug against my back. But this is awkward, the antenna tended to rotate so it now pointed along my back sideways rather than vertically, and it just plain looked silly.

Time to put the antenna on my bicycle — but how? The most common approach I'd seen is to use a rear luggage rack and mount either a groundplane or a J-Pole on the rack. I decided not to take this approach for three reasons:

[1] I don't use a luggage rack

[2] I wanted a sturdy mount that wouldn't put stress on the antenna base, and

[3] I swing my leg over the seat in order to get on my bicycle - I'd be kicking the antenna every time I mounted the bike.

I decided to mount my antenna on the front of my bicycle, right where I could see it and it wouldn't get in the way. My solution has worked well for the twelve years that I've been licensed. From bottom-to-top, this is how my antenna is mounted:

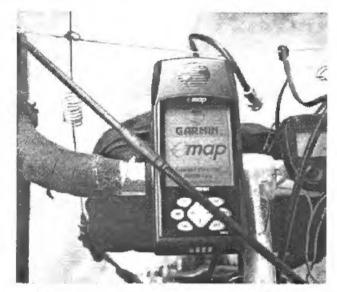
- 1) I have the sort of front-handlebar bag which has elastic ("bungee") straps down to the front hub. I used a plastic "tie-wrap" to put one end of my antenna coax at the bag-bungee interface, pointing up.
- The antenna is mounted to this connector, and rises between the handlebars a few inches inside my left brake lever.
- 3) I ran a piece of "string" (nylon cord in my case) between the top of each brake lever, which is pulled reasonably tight. This string does not impede my hands in any position -- I ride on the hoods, on the drops, and on the inner handlebar just as before. There is a small (1/4 inch) loop in the string which my antenna passes through.

Skip, AA6WK

Pictures of Skip's antenna appear on Page 7. Ed.

Product Review – Mounting Bracket for the Garmin eMap (GPS)

Skip La Fetra, AA6WK



Like most of you, I bicycle along routes and in areas that I am thoroughly familiar with - why should I put a GPS on my bicycle?

But I'm a bit of a gadget person – and for \$5 (plus another \$5 shipping), I decided to mount my Garmin eMap on my handlebars. I have two GPS units (actually, over time I have bought four units, but have given two away to relatives). My Garmin StreetPilot sits on my car dashboard and has given reliable service through two cross-country driving trips (the reason I bought it).

Since at times I need to travel on business, I bought the Garmin eMap as a more portable version of the StreetPilot (it uses maps which are interchangeable with the StreetPilot).

But why put this on my bicycle? I certainly don't go so far afield that I'm not aware of where I am.... or is this really true?

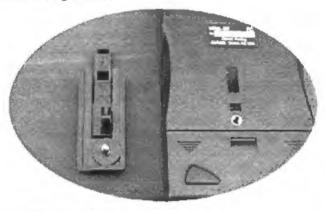
I'd been interested in putting my GPS on the bike, but could not find a convenient mounting solution – until I ran across a message in an Internet "notes group". I investigated and for \$5 (plus the same amount of shipping) ordered the "eMap handlebar mounting bracket) from TVNAV.COM {http://www.tvnav.com/emapbike.html}. (Note: I have no relation with this company – I found it, I ordered, I received, and I am happy.)

Why carry a GPS on your bike?

Frankly, I don't have a good answer – if you are riding your "standard" routes, there is no need. However, in my ride yesterday I found several good reasons:

- My cyclocomputer had dead batteries (okay, I haven't been riding as often as I should...).
- The eMap GPS has much more useful information than my Avocet 50 cyclocomputer (it displays current speed, distance traveled, AND shows a map of where you are).

3. I felt a new freedom to ride and "explore" where I hadn't before. I've spent 30 years bicycling in this area, but "wandered" through residential neighborhoods that I hadn't done before – and could count on bike-bridges across creeks and major highways that I would not have been confident about finding before.



Some thoughts after use:

- 1. I'm glad to have the accessory. Although I am very familiar with my bicycling location (I've lived here for 40 years), I have a new freedom to meander among the suburbs (with a more direct "ride and hammer" route, this would not be a concern).
- The information display (even not considering that the GPS includes an active map) is FAR more complete than my Avocet 50 computer.
- 3. The mounting bracket seems "flimsy" there isn't much plastic between my handlebars and the pavement. That said, it also seems to be robust enough not-to-be-a-problem. I'll give an update in a future BMHA newsletter as I gain more experience but for now, I'll trust my expensive eMap to this bracket (but I'll also watch closely).

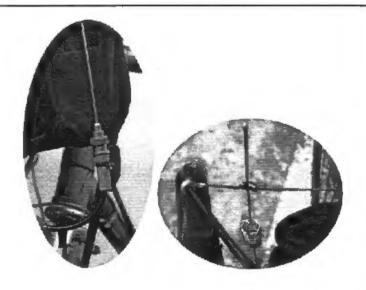
Keep cycling. This is one accessory that I thought would be "fun, but not really needed" and instead I won't ride again without it.

Skip AA6WK



Picture of Skip's Antenna from Page 5...





Back Issues Still Available.

You may purchase any of the 45 back issues of the BMHA Newsletter for \$1.50 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, 316 East 32nd Street, South Sioux City, NE 68776-3512, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

BICYCLE MOBILE H ^C / _O Mike Nickolaus, NF 316 E. 32nd St. South Sioux City, NE 6		Date
Individual \$10 (US or Canada)	New member?	Renewal?
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Make check payable to E	BMHA, in US dollars or inte	rnational money order.
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OR via the internet as an e-mail attachment _

(please check only one)

BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U; and restored by Scott A. Farrell, KE4WMF.



BMHA NEWSLETTER

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL

EDITOR'S NOTEPAD

Last Newsletter from Sea...

Things have been VERY busy lately. My ship, CGC MUNRO, spent this import period preparing for her first counternarcotics patrol with the Coast Guard's new armed helicopter, called "HITRON." After years of lost drug busts (due to a lack of speed on the part of our large cutters), HITRON was brought online in order to stop the transport of drugs into the U.S. A normal HITRON engagement includes signaling the vessel to stop via lights, sirens, and loudspeaker. If this fails (and it usually does), the HITRON gunner fires strafing shots in front of the speedboat with his M240 machine gun (similar to the M60). If strafing fire does not stop the speedboat, then the gunner whips out his .50-caliber rifle with laser scope and delivers pinpoint disabling fire to the engine. To date, HITRON helicopters have successfully stopped EVERY drug-laden speedboat they've encountered.

As a Landing Signals Officer aboard MUNRO's flight deck, I had to learn to do my flight deck duties with HITRON in the dark with only Night Vision Goggles (no lights). It's been a lot of fun. Having been promoted to Chief Petty Officer (E-7) on March 1, I'm now being transferred to Yorktown, VA to fill an instructor job teaching electronics at the Coast Guard's Weapons School. I find myself on my last

counternarcotics patrol with MUNRO. As predicted, the patrol has been interesting. HITRON has done exactly what it was designed for. The very day after the war with Iraq started we intercepted a speedboat. They ignored our hails to stop; but didn't take long to stop after being strafed. Our efforts stopped 4,700-lbs of raw cocaine, worth \$36-million, from entering the U.S. Back to the transfer, Joanne and I have a big move ahead of us. We're driving two cars with our three year old daughter, three cats, three turtles, a python, and a trailer in tow. We're stopping in several places along our 4000-mile journey. That distance should tell you we're not driving straight from "Point A" to "Point B." We'll be on the road during most of June visiting family and friends along the way.

The impending war with Iraq, HITRON workups, and preparing for my upcoming transfer left me little time to prepare this Newsletter. As a result, Bil Paul, KD6JUI, received the Newsletter via e-mail and arranged its print and delivery. THANKS, BIL! This issue is crammed with Hamvention info as well as a few useful articles. Being stationed ashore should assure a return to a more consistent Newsletter schedule. I should be able to return to a quarterly format in 2004.

73, Scott A. Farrell, KE4WMF BMHA Newsletter Editor BMHA Discussion List Owner/Moderator